DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 325 763 CG 022 916

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TITLE Counseling through the Funny Bone: Humor in Guidance.
PUB DATE Aug 88
NOTE 29p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Anxiety; *Comedy; *Counseling Techniques; Counselor Client Relationship; Elementary Secondary Education; *Emotional Adjustment; Emotional Problems; Empathy; *Humor; Individual Development; Inhibition; Rapport; Stress Management; Teacher Student Relationship
IDENTIFIERS Laughter

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role that humor may play in guidance counseling. After a brief review of the literature on the physiology of laughter and the therapeutic effects of humor, the paper draws on past research to discuss the developmental stages of humor from infancy to late adolescence and adulthood, citing examples of the kinds of humor that appeal to children at various stages. The subsequent section reviews research on humor in an educational setting. This includes findings showing the palliative effects of humor on tension and anxiety, especially during test-taking. Also discussed are examples of the value of humor as an aid for both teaching and evaluation, along with its potential dangers. A distinction is drawn in this regard between constructive humor (laughing with others) and destructive humor (laughing at others). The final section discusses implications for the use of humor in counseling. Several techniques for using humor in counseling contexts are cited and discussed, including self-effacing humor, humorous cartoons and posters, assignments with a humorous focus, humorous quotations, jokes and anecdotes, and games. It is concluded that humor can enable students to cope with the more serious side of life and create a better atmosphere for decisionmaking and problem solving. References are included. (TE)

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Counseling through the Funny Bone:
Humor in Guidance

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Counseling through the Funny Bone:
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Introduction

What do Tim Sample, Bill Cosby, Erma Bombeck, medical research, the Bible, and Family Circus have in common? Tim Sample performs it to many New England audiences, Bill Cosby demonstrates it to the nation, Erma Bombeck writes about it in family situations, medical research shows some indication of it being a healing agent, the Bible contains many references to it, and Family Circus helps us recognize it in our daily lives. The answer: Humor!

According to Webster's New World Dictionary (1983), humor means "the ability to perceive, appreciate, or express what is funny, amusing or ludicrous." Humor is a complex human phenomenon that is not easily analyzed or fully explained by researchers (Ziv, 1976). According to Ziv (1984), there are two dimensions of humor:

1.) Humor creativity is the ability to perceive relationships between people, objects or ideas in an incongruous way. It is also the ability to communicate with others verbally and elicit in others smiles or laughter.

2.) Appreciative humor is the ability to understand and enjoy messages containing humor creativity, as well as situations that are incongruous but not menacing (p. 214-215).

Kappas (1967) defines humor as an attitude of amusement with which an individual meets and interprets a given situation, and it may, as with laughter, be bound up with negative or positive emotions. A sense of humor is the attitude of amusement intrinsic to the individual and it finds numerous forms of expression.

Laughter is a typical reaction to humor. According to Ziv (1976), "We are not aware of the complex physiological mechanism while we are laughing and instead in most instances what we feel is an enjoyable, delightful and happy experience" (p. 19).

Koestler (1979) calls laughter the "luxury reflex". It seems to have a mind of its own and is as unique as our fingerprints. Unlike other reflexes, laughter seems to serve no biological purpose. Koestler concludes that "the involuntary contraction of fifteen facial muscles, associated with certain irrepressible noises, strikes one as an activity without any utilitarian value, quite unrelated to survival" (p. 276). However, it is clear that laughter works off tension, as in "nervous laughter"; and it has long been considered an aid to digestion (Cornett, 1986).

Peter and Dana (1982) cite the following four ways humor and laughter control pain:

1. by distracting attention
2. by reducing tension
3. by changing expectations
4. by increasing production of endorphins - the body's natural painkillers.

They claim that laughter's ability to cause the muscles suddenly to go limp can be of great value in the treatment of stress. According to Rogers (1984), psychiatrists define the well-adjusted, emotionally healthy individual as one who has the capacity to laugh, to put things into perspective, and to separate genuine tragedy from mere annoyance. The sick person lacks this ability. The person with a strong, healthy personality is much more able to cope successfully with adversity if s/he possesses a well developed sense of humor. This has been proven by accounts of survivors of the Nazi concentration camps, Korean prisoners of war, and Iranian hostages (Ziegler, 1985).

Gesell, Ilg, & Ames (1977) say that children would not indulge in so much spontaneous and meaningless laughter if it did not have a wholesome effect upon their behavior and mental growth. According to Berger (1983), laughter contributes to the mental development of children. It helps the child develop better complex reasoning skills, seek intellectual rewards and make long-term plans. As significant changes are made in the child's behavior and mental growth, many psychologists feel that laughter has a major role in helping the child dissolve tension and develop at a healthful rate.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the role which humor may play in guidance counseling. The paper will begin by discussing developmental stages of humor and will review research on the use of humor in an educational setting. Finally, implications for the use of humor in counseling will be drawn.

Developmental Stages of Humor

Many teachers have been surprised, bewildered and sometimes even angered by what children consider hilarious. The fall of a child whose chair is pulled from under him/her invariably draws an uproar from other children. But the teacher usually does not see the incident as amusing because a prank of this kind can hurt a child's feelings, even if unhurt otherwise. Also, the teacher may consider the laughter as unwarranted hostility toward the child and therefore treat the incident as a classroom discipline problem. Why do children laugh at things that the teacher doesn't find amusing (Tamashior, 1979)?

Developmental stages may account for various forms of children's humor, especially humor that teachers may have difficulty enjoying. Although each person's sense of humor is unique, it follows a developmental pattern that parallels intellectual and emotional development. Personality variables also influence this developmental progression. Cultural and educational background, play opportunities, and gender may also account for individual differences in a sense of humor (Cornett, 1986).

Early in life, the infant discovers that objects in the world are stable, an idea known as object constancy, and the infant defines himself as one object in the world (Tamashiro, 1979). This period extends over the presocial and symbiotic periods and corresponds roughly to Piaget's stage of sensorimotor

intelligence. The major conscious concern seems to be to differentiate self from non-self on a bodily level (Clarke-Stewart, Perlmutter, Friedman, 1988). Children in this stage laugh when their bodies are tickled or objects are brought into direct contact with the body (Helms & Turner, 1986). They are concerned with identifying the boundary where their body ends and the outside world begins. During this period there is little laughing at oral statements in which humor is based on meaning of words (Tamashiro, 1979).

At the next stage, the child is asserting his emerging sense of self, largely by using the word "no." Tamashiro (1979) refers to this stage as the impulsive stage because the child seems to be governed by his impulses or has unwittingly defined the "I" as his impulses.

Noises of the body, such as hiccups, burps, and passing gas, often draw laughter at this stage. These are linked to their preoccupation with physical functions. Body parts are also a source for amusement. Martha Wolfenstein wrote:

> A girl of five was very fond of using words for more or less taboo body parts, such as "bottom." If her mother happened to say, "I think I'll put this in the bottom drawer" the child would shout delightedly, "You said 'bottom!'" (Tamashiro, 1979).

During early childhood the onset of the capacity to experience humor is stimulus discrepancy (McGhee, 1972). Eastman (1963)

describes the stimulus phenomenon as visual and a ludicrous condition or one that looks funny. The child, who perceives it as strange or distorted, laughs at the perceived discrepancy (Aho, 1979). Possible joke telling at this stage may consist of: "Why did the chicken cross the road?" "To eat snakes," or "Knock, knock." "Who's there?" "Mickey Mouse's underwear." (Clarke-Stewart, Perlmutter, Friedman, 1988).

At the next stage, the child is capable of delay when it is to his/her immediate advantage. It is as if the child has discovered the boundary between self and others in the form of psychological territory and begins to protect it. The self-definition shifts from impulses to concrete self-interests and wants (Tamashiro, 1979). This stage is called self-protective. For example, if the child gives a wrong answer in a school setting, the child may say, "I knew it all the time. I just wondered how bright you were."

At this stage the child tries harder to identify with adults. The child is physically looking more mature and becomes more curious about the world by reading and verbalizing with adults (Gesell, Ilg, Ames, 1977). As the child watches adult reactions to the child's jokes, the child's listening skills are developing and a sense of what is funny to others begins to develop. Some examples of humor at this age are: "What happens when a car goes into a tunnel?" "What?" "It gets dark." or "What is even worse

than biting into an apple and finding a worm?" "Finding half a worm." or "If April showers bring May flowers, what do May flowers bring?" "Pilgrims." (Berger, 1983, p. 301-302).

Between ages eight and ten, children usually understand logical principles, as long as the principles can be applied to specific or concrete examples. They can usually reason about almost anything they perceive (Berger, 1983).

> "One day George and Bobby found an old raft, and they decided to take their picnic lunch and eat it on the raft. When they got out in the middle of the lake, George took his big thermos of lemonade and drank it all at once. Just then the raft started to sink. George said, "That'll teach me! Drinking all that lemonade made me too heavy for the raft."

Tamashiro (1979) also noted that at this stage for the first time, the child is capable of forethought and delay of gratification. These cognitive abilities enable the child to plan and set up a practical joke (Gesell, Ilg, & Ames, 1956). These practical jokes involve the exercising of new cognitive abilities and may be a specific means of gaining advantage and control over others. According to Gesell, Ilg, & Ames (1977), the nine and ten year old find it easier to perpetrate practical jokes as well as to accept them. It is even possible to laugh off some teasing.

Gesell, Ilg, & Ames (1977) cite that some dialogues that are found to be amusing at this stage include descriptions of making someone uncomfortable or of one person being fooled by another. Surprises are also enjoyed in humorous stories. An excellent example would be the following childhood favorite joke:

> "Adam and Even and Pinch-me went to sea on a raft. Adam and Eve fell in and who was left? The child, sufficiently incautious in his/her desire to show that he/she knows, answers 'Pinch-me' and of course, receives a sharp pinch" (Tamashiro, 1979, p. 72).

Often times the retelling of a joke is not successful and the child wonders why the listener doesn't laugh. There is a fear of being made fun of if jokes are played on them. But here is a tendency to joke about others. "Sally and Billy up in a tree, k-i-s-s-i-n-g" is another popular joke among children in this age group.

Tamashiro (1979) explains that the next stage most often emerges in later adolescence or adulthood. Here self-evaluated standards are more important than group norms and standards. One's conscience, values and sense of personal satisfaction govern one's thoughts and actions more than social desirability does. The child recognizes individual differences, traits and motives in himself/herself and others. They are also able to consider the positive and negative consequences of their actions on others.

According to Gesell, Ilg, & Ames (1956), sarcasm becomes an important element in the development of humor. Less practical joking takes place except in school. Loud, foolish horseplay and clowning around is still considered funny, especially by boys. Kidding each other about the opposite sex occurs often, and some are beginning to take kidding better, although individual differences exist.

Other types of humor consist of off-color jokes in mixed company, criticizing parents under the guise of humor, and practical jokes such as calling a taxi when one is not needed. Understanding the subtle and hidden meanings of adult jokes begins to become clearer. Acknowledging parents' sense of humor begins to form (Gesell, Ilg, & Ames, 1956).

According to Gesell, Ilg, & Ames (1956), smutty humor is used with both girls and boys, although when asked about using it, girls will usually say they prefer "clean humor". Examples may consist of stretching the corners of the mouth and saying, "Two white horses jumped over the fence and parted," or "Aren't you glad elephants don't fly?" (p. 344).

Tamashiro (1979) says individuals at this stage enjoy original, non-cliqued and good-natured humor. For example, a lawyer praising the work of a judge said:

> He's one of the busiest, hardest working judges. Just last week he handled two cases of assault and battery, three cases of armed robbery and four cases of Budweiser (p. 71).

The strong sense of values and conscience may also be a source of humor for people at this stage. In one survey, Tamashiro (1979) cited the following incident:

> A feminist was giving a speech in support of the Equal Rights Amendment. She was interrupted by the deep voice of a heckler from the crowd: "Don't you wish you were a man?" "No," she replied without missing a beat. "How about you?" (p. 73).

Persons at this stage may enjoy the types of humor found at previous stages. However, they may object to the hostility, the silliness, or what they consider the meaninglessness of the jokes (Tamashiro, 1979).

Each of these stages can be applied to a wide range of ages. The stages are not limited to any particular age. However, the stages are sequential and individuals at the earlier stages do not comprehend the forms of humor that emerge at the later stages. Children at the later stages have the potential to understand the humor enjoyed by children at the earlier stages, but may also criticize it for its hostility or primitiveness (Berger, 1983).

According to Cornett (1986), teachers can use a developmental perspective on children's humor to assess students' concerns and abilities and to better understand some types of children's humor that may lead to discipline problems. The value of viewing children's humor from a developmental perspective and

understanding the developmental levels of humor in children may enable the educator to make more effective and harmonious decisions regarding instructional and disciplinary measures.

By including humor in classroom activities, the learning environment may become more delightful and developmentally meaningful to students. This paper will now review research related to research in educational settings.

Research on Humor in an Educational Setting

According to Townsend & Mahoney (1981), there has not been much research conducted on humor in education. They cite that it may be an act of heresy to question the instructional benefits of humor. However, several research studies have challenged some of the popular assumptions concerning humor in education. The findings show that there are complex relationships between academic performance, humor, and anxiety. According to Tamashiro (1979), the awareness of the therapeutic effect which humor has on individuals may help educators recognize its need in education today. Studies have been conducted concerning the chemicals released in the body during laughter that help decrease physical pain. According to Peter & Dana (1982), it, of course, does not have a lasting effect. However, the temporary relief enables periodic restful moments that would otherwise not be enjoyed.

Laughter will not cure ills or eliminate terminal illnesses. But research shows that fear, stress and depression can have

physical effects on the human body. Peter & Dana (1982) cite that laughter can ease tensions and thus alleviate many physical changes in the body.

The following quote by James Walsh, an American physician, sums up the effect of humor on tension and stress:

> "The effect of laughter upon the mind not only brings relaxation with it, so far as mental tension is concerned, but makes it also less prone to dreads and less solicitous about the future. This favorable effect on the mind influences various functions of the body and makes them healthier than would otherwise be the case." (Cornett, p. 30).

Other research has been conducted on the effects of humor during test taking. An investigation on test performance by Terry & Woods (1975) led to the conclusion that the introduction of humor into a testing situation can facilitate performance by relaxing highly anxious students.

Since the anxiety level during test taking increases with age, the age differences in research samples showed significant differences (Townsend & Mahoney, 1981). The investigations showed that highly anxious students scored significantly higher on a humorous test than on a nonhumorous test. According to Terry & Woods (1975), this is presumably because the humor reduced the high anxiety down to the optimal level. But they also report that

students with lower anxiety tended to do more poorly on the humorous test than the nonhumorous test. Terry & Woods (1975) suggested that this phenomenon may have occurred because their anxiety was reduced to below the optimal level.

According to Morris, Urbach & O'Connor (1985), studies showed that performance on tests was neither improved nor impaired by the inclusion of humor. They cited that:

> "If humor helps create positive affect, reduces negative affect, and does not depress scores, its use is warranted. If humor minimizes some of the negative attitudes prompted by testing and reduces the threat in many testing situations, then the progress of the test taker and the effectiveness of the instructional program might be depicted more accurately. With the inclusion of humor, the whole testing process could be somewhat more humane" (p. 228).

In the past fifteen years, humor has resurfaced as a possible aid for both teaching and evaluation. Typically, educators have emphasized that positive results can be obtained by incorporating humor in instruction and tests (Moris, Urbach & O'Connor, 1985).

Researchers have found that humor flourishes better in a democratic atmosphere than in an authoritarian one (Ziv, 1984). The democratic atmosphere is one in which children are encouraged to express themselves freely and without censure. Every child is accepted and respected as an individual who has strengths, weaknesses, and the human capacity to make mistakes.

According to Cornett (1986),

> "Somehow students must learn to use humor appropriately so they can enjoy its many benefits. Teachers with a sense of humor bring joy to themselves and show students a side of being human. Teachers that share humorous personal anecdotes, read humorous literature aloud, and laugh at students jokes, demonstrate to their students that they are capable of a range of other emotions" (p. 38).

Humor can also have its dangers in the classroom (Cornett, 1986). If it occurs at the wrong moment, it may destroy a mood or distract attention; if it gets out of hand, it may turn a classroom into a circus. If the humor ridicules, feelings may be hurt. Cornett states: "It is only those who cling to rigidity and conformity who fear humor" (p. 38). As Koestler (1979) said, "Dictators fear laughter more than bombs" (p. 277).

Goodman (1986) states that humor can be both constructive and destructive. Effective humor is humor that allows people to laugh with others, as opposed to laughing at others. He went on to say that it is sometimes difficult to recognize the difference between laughing at others and laughing with others. In distinguishing between "put-ups" and "put-downs" he said, "Humor is laughter made from pain - not pain inflicted by laughter" (p. 123). For example, laughing at someone who just fell and scattered books and other possessions all over the floor is laughing at another's pain and embarrassment.

The positive use of humor can be rewarding in the classroom. According to Hamilton (1986), humor is often used to gain attention. A good joke or funny story serves as an ice breaker in class discussions. Hamilton (1986) says that by encouraging humor in the classroom the teacher is better able to build closer communication with students and allow more freedom between young people and the teacher.

Listening skills are strengthened when students can relate a funny story to one of their own experiences. Students feel more at ease in the classroom and are likely to challenge new ideas in their work. According to Hamilton (1986), humor also encourages children to take risks and assert their independence. If the atmosphere is too rigid or too serious, students will be tense. This might lead to an unwillingness to take risks and the stifling of creativity.

Many students who encounter problems in reading and language arts may be emotionally disturbed or learning disabled (Colwell, 1981). Rather than ease their burdens, unfriendly school climates (lack of peer acceptance and failing grades) may compound their problems. According to Colwell (1981), subjecting such students to twelve years of compulsory education in a hostile environment may be equal to subjecting them to compulsory failure. According to Moe & Hopkins (1978), researchers and educators working with normal children as well as children with moderate or severe reading problems, found that short, light, humorous reading serves as a strong motivating factor.

Humor provides an outlet to ease the problem and motivate the student. Colwell (1981) states that humorous activities may enable a student with a sense of humor to experience success which is the best motivator of all.

A vital teacher naturally and also deliberately establishes an atmosphere of cheerful give-and-take. In such an atmosphere humor becomes somewhat contagious.

Goodman (1986) describes a teacher whose class had prearranged to knock their books off their desks at 10:18 a.m. The teacher, who was at the chalkboard, was caught completely off guard by the loud crash. Losing none of her poise, she walked over to her desk, knocked one of her own books on the floor, smiled, and said apologeticlaly, "Sorry, I'm a little bit late." By using her own sense of humor both responsibly and creatively, this teacher kept the lesson on track. She had provided an excellent model of poise and good nature, and managed to retain her position as a respected member of the group (Goodman, 1986).

Many unpredictable social situations arise that can be exploited to release humor (Gesell, Ilg, & Ames, 1977). The teacher, as well as the students, benefits from the use of humor. A more relaxed relationship develops as a result of this close community within the classroom (Hamilton, 1986).

Although humor is not an official subject of the curriculum, there is hardly an art that does not have a place for the

expression of humor in the schoolroom. Gesell, Ilg, & Ames (1977) claim that humor is expressed in drawing, music, sculpturing, dancing, dramatics, but above all literature.

The power which humor exhibits in education is expressed eloquently by Ziegler (1985): "A good sense of humor is the mark of a creative thinker who can stimulate others and create feelings of good will" (p. 347).

Implications for the Use of Humor in Counseling

Counselors need to be aware of their own potential for humor and look for ways to develop and use it. According to Sluder (1986), "The adult who models a good sense of humor and allows students to discover and develop their own is arming them with a very powerful and effective coping skill" (p. 124).

Humor in counseling, according to Sluder (1986), has two dimensions for nurturing healthy characteristics of the child:

1.) The first step is to cultivate an environment that is conducive to the development of both creative and appreciative humor. Researchers have found that humor flourishes better in an atmosphere in which children are encouraged to express themselves freely and without censure, rather than an authoritarian atmosphere.

2.) Humor must be used sincerely and in moderation to avoid appearing phony or manipulative. Other

limitations involve timing and the type of humor expressed. There are some occasions when any kind of humor is inappropriate, and there are some types of humor that are always undesirable.

Sluder (1986) cites that the counselor is one of the most visible professionals in the school. They can be a powerful influence in cultivating an atmosphere that allows students to appreciate humor through acceptance and respect for others. Sluder (1986) states that children appreciate humor and are quick to use it in solving their own problems if they feel accepted and respected in their environment.

Sluder (1986) cited an incident which occurred during a counseling session. A racially mixed group of fifth graders visibly showed their distaste and outrage when a classmate stated, "I'm not afraid to be alone in our house at night now that I have a nigger-knocker." In the stunned silence that followed, the counselor asked, "Does it also work on us honkies?" The immediate release of laughter from the class indicated that their sense of fair play was still intact and that a positive, equalizing process had occurred.

Regularly scheduled counseling groups create an excellent opportunity for the counselor to implement strategies to nurture the development of humor. Children's literature is often the basic component of group guidance. Sluder (1986) states:

> "Authors who write about humorous situations that happen to real people...allow children to understand that life can be highly entertaining; it is not always serious...humorous situations and characterizations may be used to highlight real problems and make reading about them palatable" (p. 124).

A favorite curriculum for counselors working with young children is Dinkmeyer's Developing Understanding of Self and Others (DUSO). This program is designed to be used in the classroom to encourage positive self-image, to become more aware of the relationships between the students and other people and to recognize needs and goals. Many daily problems are enacted in fairy tale fashion which enable children to respond to the actions of the characters. Topics may deal with fears, problem solving, social skills, etc.

Humor can also be used in small group or individual counseling. Sluder (1986) states that most elementary counselors have neither the time nor the training to implement humor therapy exclusively as a counseling technique. Instead, many may use humor selectively as a counseling tool. Exaggeration and self-disclosure are often the techniques used.

Sluder (1986) explained that exaggeration is a concept that most children understand, perhaps because they do it themselves. Melissa was afraid of the noise during thunder storms. After

talking to the counselor about her fears, the counselor said, "Maybe you could make the same noises back at the storm." It brough a tearful smile to the child who was determined to conquer the fear.

Self-disclosure often helps children realize that their problem is not an oddity. For example, "I was afraid of storms when I was younger too, but I learned to make other noises during the storm and then I wasn't afraid."

Sluder (1986) also stated that children are very curious about adults who interact with them at school and will quickly identify with humorous accounts of adult's mistakes and failures. Whenever counselors can share a humorous incident about themselves, they are saying in effect, "I'm human, too." Children, whether in small or large groups, can relate to that and will love it (Sluder, 1986).

According to Goodman (1986), putting humorous cartoons, posters, and pictures up on the guidance office walls will help parents, students, teachers, and other visitors realize that there is still something to smile about. A humorous prop on the counselor's desk can help students identify or express humor. One counselor had a little rubber doll on the desk; when the doll is squeezed, the eyes, nose, and tongue bulge out.

Another technique might be to provide assignments with a humorous focus (Goodman, 1986). For instance, a child who is seeing the counselor for a particular problem may be asked to find

a cartoon strip dealing with the same problem. The challenge is for the child to start looking for the bright side of the situation and be able to change. Helping children to understand how humor may be relevant to the situation may help to change their perspective. Crabbs, Crabbs & Goodman (1986) state: "Let's invite humor, let's embrace humor, and let's build humor into our lives and jobs" (p. 141).

Cornett (1986) cites some practical humorous ideas which may be implemented by the counselor:

1.) Start a humorous quotations collection to which students can add. They could be on a bulletin board or in a file box.

2.) Hold a best-joke contest. Have students rate submitted jokes or read them aloud to determine funniness rating.

3.) Do an art project with pictures of animal or body parts combined to create incongruous images. Have students name their creations.

4.) Share personal humorous anecdotes and allow students to do the same.

5.) Put different laughs on cards, distribute them, and have students demonstrate (for example, guffaw, snicker, giggle, chortle, snort, cackle, chuckle).

6.) Make a chart of what makes people laugh: words, people, objects, events.

7.) Play tickle tag. Elementary students will enjoy tickling instead of tagging.

8.) Collect laughs on a tape recorder. Label and try to match to owners.

9.) Collect humorous quotations and photos from newspapers.

10.) Set up a tongue-twister station for students to use when work is complete.

11.) Take candid school shots with a camera and let students caption them.

12.) Set up a display of humorous literature and authors in the library. (p. 35-36).

Although the research on humor in counseling is somewhat sparse, it is evident that it could be another effective strategy or tool for the counselor to use.

Humor is an important part of the guidance curriculum. It may be one way some students can learn to cope with daily problems. Sluder (1986) stated:

> "Today, as the threat of nuclear extinction hangs heavy over the earth, as children watch hope and pride turned to grief as their heroes and heroines aboard the Challenger explode into the Atlantic; as economic problems, divorce, and abuse attest to the accelerating breakup of the American family; and as violence and the 'anything goes' morality of television continues,

children need to be able to laugh. Laughter is a way of 'thumbing one's nose' at the inescapable and incomprehensible vagaries of existence and declaring, 'I choose to rise above this. I choose to meet life head on, excited about the varied possibilities in each day. If I can laugh, I can grow into the person I was meant to be, free and complete.' Laughter is freedom. In a sense, it is the only freedom we have." (p. 126).

Humor as part of the curriculum in education is not a topic which has been widely researched. Some research shows that the effect of humor can benefit attitudes of students as well as teachers. Humor can also benefit academic performance.

Counselors, as leaders in the educational system, have the power to include humor in both group and individual counseling sessions. Humor will enable students to cope with the more serious side of life. Using humor, students can create a better atmosphere for decision making and problem solving.

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March 29, 1991